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ABSTRACT

The Parent Opinion Inventory was developed to accomplish three goals: (1) to assess parents' attitudes toward their children's school and its programs; (2) to provide an opportunity for parents to make specific recommendations for improvement; and (3) to provide decision-making data relative to program development, policy formation, administrative organization, faculty development, and community relations. The 53 items of Part A deal with intra-student body relationships, school information services, parent involvement, educational objectives, intra-school problems, school program factors, innovative programs, student activities, support services, auxiliary services, and general psychological climate. Questions are of the strongly agree-agree-disagree-strongly disagree-no opinion format. Part B consists of five open-ended questions soliciting recommendations for improvement. This manual includes a description of the development of this inventory, instructions for administering it, instructions for scoring and interpreting the test, and reliability and validity data. One copy of Part A and Part B are included in full. (BW)

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

Parent Opinion Inventory

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NATIONAL STUDY OF SCHOOL EVALUATION

2201 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, Virginia 22201

TM006 995

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INTRODUCTION

The National Study of School Evaluation believes that school evaluation is an endeavor by a local school staff to comprehensively review the school's program, operation, and results. The school must determine how closely its purposes and philosophy coincide with its actual practices, as well as the degree to which its stated objectives are being reached.

The National Study of School Evaluation, a nonprofit, incorporated organization, has been developing instruments for school evaluation since 1933. The materials now available include: The fourth edition of the *Evaluative Criteria* for secondary schools, the *Elementary School Evaluative Criteria*, the *Junior High School/Middle School Evaluative Criteria*, *Evaluation Guidelines for Multicultural/Multiracial Education*, the *Student Opinion Inventory*, the *Teacher Opinion Inventory*, and the *Secondary School Evaluative Criteria: Narrative Edition*.

Administrators faced with the increasingly complex task of administering schools find it important to gather data for decision-making from a variety of sources. The professionally trained administrator recognizes that among our many publics, parents with children in school are in a good position to assess what is going on in school. It is essential, therefore, that we accurately assess and analyze the opinions of this knowledgeable population in a manner that will provide a reliable and valid pool of data to serve as guidelines in the decision-making process. The *Parent Opinion Inventory* was developed to accomplish three goals:

1. To assess parents' attitudes in reference to their school and its programs.
2. To provide parents an opportunity to make specific recommendations for improvement.
3. To provide valuable data for school personnel in the decision-making process relative to program development, policy formulation, administrative organization, faculty development, and community relations.

DEVELOPMENT

The National Study of School Evaluation developed the *Parent Opinion Inventory* to accomplish the three goals listed above. The instrument was designed to be used by itself, in conjunction with the *Student Opinion Inventory* and *Teacher Opinion Inventory*, or as a part of a complete school evaluation program.

Development of the *Parent Opinion Inventory* followed a three phase design. The initial phase began with a review of questionnaire development, an examination of parent questionnaires from other studies, and a review of the *Student Opinion Inventory* and the *Teacher Opinion Inventory* of the National Study of School Evaluation. Out of this research came the first draft of the instrument. The initial projection of items was reviewed by a "jury of experts," consisting of doctoral level students and professors in instruction and curriculum, school administration, and research. Following considerable development and analysis, a revised draft was prepared and subjected to further scrutiny by the Administrative Committee of the National Study of School Evaluation, parent teacher organizations, and other educators with pertinent expertise. In addition, a pilot test was conducted in two schools to serve as a final check on the adequacy of the instrument.

Phase II of the development involved field testing the instrument in 17 school communities in nine different states, the test sites representing varying sizes, socioeconomic composition, and school levels. In addition to administering the instrument, the field site administrators were asked to provide both an appraisal of the instrument's effectiveness in soliciting parent opinion and recommendations for improving the instrument before final publication.

Phase III of the development involved the determination of the subscale reliability of the instrument and the internal consistency of each item. Only those items which proved consistent with the total instrument and individual subscales were retained in the final copy. In addition, suggestions made by parents for improvement of the instrument were examined and utilized in the modification of the instrument.

Part A of the *Parent Opinion Inventory* is comprised of 53 multiple choice items treating 11 subscales as shown in Table 27.

TABLE 27. SUBSCALES OF THE PARENT OPINION INVENTORY AND THEIR CORRESPONDING ITEM NUMBERS AND RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS.

Subscale	*Item Number*	*Coefficient*
Intra-student body relationships	1- 2	*
School information services	3- 4	*
Parent involvement	5- 7	.50
Educational objectives	8-18	.80
Intra-school problems	19-26	.78
School program factors	27-33	.81
Innovative programs	34-35	*
Student activities	36-39	.67
Support services	40-42	.58
Auxiliary services	43-46	.64
General psychological climate	47.53	.78

*Insufficient numbers of items in the subscale prevent calculation of subscale scores. Correlation coefficients between the two items of each set is high.

Part B of the *Parent Opinion Inventory* is comprised of five open-ended questions. Schools using the instrument may add, delete, or change these questions in order to gain a maximum amount of relevant information for a particular school. Note, however, that changes can not be made in Part A without running the risk of affecting the reliability of that instrument.

Many items in the *Parent Opinion Inventory* are similar to items in the *Student Opinion Inventory* and *Teacher Opinion Inventory*. In some instances, the items are worded essentially the same and assess identical opinions, in other cases, the items are worded differently but assess related opinions. The purpose of the common items is to provide the school administration and staff with opinions of teachers, students, and parents so that areas of potential conflict may be determined. Table 28 shows those items that the three instruments have in common.

TABLE 28. COMMON ITEMS ON THE TEACHER, STUDENT, AND PARENT OPINION INVENTORIES.

Item from Parent Opinion Inventory	*Item from Teacher Opinion Inventory*	*Item for Student Opinion Inventory*
	Part A	
3	42	
4	43	
8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15	13, 50, 55, 57, 52	24
17	58	
27	44	
29	16, 18	6, 7, 8, 9
36	25, 26	2, 3
40	35, 36, 37, 38	13, 14, 15, 16, 17
48	46	30
50	2	18
51	17	11, 12
52	16	8, 10, 14
	Part B	
3	6	5
4	3, 4, 5	
5	8	

ADMINISTERING THE INSTRUMENT

The administrator of the *Parent Opinion Inventory* must be aware of several factors relating to the use of this instrument. Traditional methods used by school administrators to assess parental sentiment have predominantly centered on highly individualistic points of view. Typical techniques center around parent-teacher organization input, public hearings, pressure groups, telephone feedback, and random discussion. As a result, an extreme position, not reflective of parental consensus, is often voiced on a particular issue.

In order to surmount the situation described above, the following procedure is suggested for administering the instrument:

A. Selection of Parent Sample

1. The first step in conducting the survey is to determine the number of school patrons you wish to include in the sample. Generally speaking, the larger the sample, the more reliable the results. A 25 percent sample is sufficient.
2. Random Sample Selection Procedure. It is important that the sample selected for survey is truly representative of the entire parent population. The procedure to be described, while not a true random sample, will provide a representative cross section of your parent population.

   Example—The school enrollment is 950. It is decided to survey 250 sets of parents. Divide 950 by 250.

   a. $\frac{950}{250} = 3.8$ Round off to the nearest whole number (4.0).

   b. From an alphabetized list of the entire student body, select every fourth parent, beginning with the first name on the alphabetized list. Should the end of the alphabetized list of names be reached before the desired sample population size is obtained, return to the second name on the alphabetized list and select every fourth parent until the appropriate sample population is completed.

B. Stimulating a high return

If the survey is to be of value, a high rate of *Inventory* return is essential. To facilitate this return, the following recommendations are made:

1. Include a personal cover letter of explanation, stressing importance of returning the instrument.
2. In the letter ask that parents return the instrument within a two-week time period.
3. At the secondary level, *Inventories* should be mailed directly to the parents with a self-addressed, stamped return envelope enclosed.
4. At the elementary level, high return rates are possible by having the *Inventories* delivered and returned by the student.
5. Return rates can be further enhanced by: follow-up letters asking for cooperation, newspaper, radio, and T.V. announcements, and requests to students to remind their parents.

SCORING AND INTERPRETING

The *Parent Opinion Inventory* may be either hand scored or machine scored. To facilitate machine scoring, all data must be transferred to machine scored answer sheets, or each may be keypunched onto IBM cards for analysis. It is recommended that each item be individually scored on a percentage response basis utilizing the following steps:

1. Tally the number of responses (frequency) for every response category on a single item.
2. Compute the percent of response for each category by dividing the frequency (number) for each response category by the total number of responses to that item.
3. Analyze each item by the percent of individuals occupying each category:

   A. Strongly Agree
   B. Agree
   C. Disagree
   D. Strongly Disagree
   E. No Opinion

The item responses may also be interpreted by computing item mean scores according to the following method:

1. Tally the number of responses (frequency) for every response category on a single item.
2. Compute the item mean score by multiplying the frequency for each category value, add these products, and divide by the total number of responses.

   The category values are:

   A — 4
   B — 3
   C — 2
   D — 1
   E — 0

   Interpretation of Item Mean Score:
   4 — Strongly Agree
   3 — Agree
   2 — Disagree
   1 — Strongly Disagree

RELIABILITY

Coefficient alpha reliability of internal consistency for Part A is .94. This coefficient is based on the responses of 896 parents of elementary and secondary student from selected schools in nine states during the 1975-76 school year. No test re-test reliability coefficients have been determined.

VALIDITY

The *Parent Opinion Inventory* was developed to aid school administrators in the decision-making process by providing data regarding parent opinion toward many facets of the school and their recommendations for improvement. Judgments of specialists, practitioners, and parents were used during the three phases of the development process in order to assure validity of the instrument. The initial phase utilized doctoral level students and professors representing instruction, curriculum, and research. The task of this group involved making judgments regarding inclusion and wording of items, placement of items in categories, and determination of the sufficiency of items in assessing parent opinion. The second step of Phase I involved a critical review of the instrument by selected parent groups and a pilot test at an elementary and secondary school. The third phase of development involved an analysis of the final draft of the instrument by the Administrative Committee of the National Study of School Evaluation to insure that the instrument design would be valid when used throughout the United States.

In Phase II, the field test administrators of the test schools were unanimous in their belief that the instrument was valid for sampling parent opinion. In addition, responding parents rated all items as good or acceptable.

PARENT OPINION INVENTORY

The purpose of this survey is to assist your school in learning more about itself by measuring the attitudes of its patrons toward the program and related matters. Your opinions are of vital importance to this assessment. There are no right or wrong answers. The answers you give will be completely confidential.

PART A

Directions

Please read each item carefully. Note that there are five responses below each item. Select the response which most clearly represents your feelings, and circle the letter immediately to the left of the response selected.

Example: Our school maintains high standards.

A. Strongly Agree
(B.) Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

The Parent Opinion Inventory, Part A, is packaged separately and may be purchased in quantity from the National Study of School Evaluation.

NATIONAL STUDY OF SCHOOL EVALUATION
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PARENT OPINION INVENTORY

PART A

1. Students in our school are generally respectful of each other.
   A. Strongly Agree
   B. Agree
   C. Disagree
   D. Strongly Disagree
   E. No Opinion

2. Most students and teachers in our school maintain good working relationships.
   A. Strongly Agree
   B. Agree
   C. Disagree
   D. Strongly Disagree
   E. No Opinion

3. Reports from our school concerning children's progress are adequate.
   A. Strongly Agree
   B. Agree
   C. Disagree
   D. Strongly Disagree
   E. No Opinion

4. Parents are informed about educational practices of our school.
   A. Strongly Agree
   B. Agree
   C. Disagree
   D. Strongly Disagree
   E. No Opinion

5. The concerns of parents are reflected in decisions made by our school.
   A. Strongly Agree
   B. Agree
   C. Disagree
   D. Strongly Disagree
   E. No Opinion

6. Our community is actively involved in operating the school.
   A. Strongly Agree
   B. Agree
   C. Disagree
   D. Strongly Disagree
   E. No Opinion

7. If given the opportunity, I would become more involved in our school's affairs.
   A. Strongly Agree
   B. Agree
   C. Disagree
   D. Strongly Disagree
   E. No Opinion

8. Our school is helping to prepare children to cope with a rapidly changing society.
   A. Strongly Agree
   B. Agree
   C. Disagree
   D. Strongly Disagree
   E. No Opinion

9. Our school is helping to teach children to be responsible citizens.
   A. Strongly Agree
   B. Agree
   C. Disagree
   D. Strongly Disagree
   E. No Opinion

10. Our school is helping children to understand world problems.
    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Disagree
    D. Strongly Disagree
    E. No Opinion

11. Our school is doing a good job in teaching children the basic skills. (math, science, reading)
    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Disagree
    D. Strongly Disagree
    E. No Opinion

12. Our school is doing an adequate job of helping my children understand their moral and ethical responsibilities.
    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Disagree
    D. Strongly Disagree
    E. No Opinion

13. Our school's program helps children to understand and get along with other people.
    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Disagree
    D. Strongly Disagree
    E. No Opinion

14. The physical education program at our school offers a wide variety of good activities.
    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Disagree
    D. Strongly Disagree
    E. No Opinion

15. Health Classes at our school include adequate attention to mental health as well as physical health.
    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Disagree
    D. Strongly Disagree
    E. No Opinion

16. Our school places the right amount of emphasis on teaching children to understand and appreciate the cultural diversity in our community.
    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Disagree
    D. Strongly Disagree
    E. No Opinion

17. Our school is placing the right emphasis on the teaching of history.
    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Disagree
    D. Strongly Disagree
    E. No Opinion

18. The curriculum in our school is adequate for students planning to continue their education beyond high school graduation.
    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Disagree
    D. Strongly Disagree
    E. No Opinion

19. Discipline in our school should be more strict.
    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Disagree
    D. Strongly Disagree
    E. No Opinion

20. The use of drugs in our school is not a serious problem.
    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Disagree
    D. Strongly Disagree
    E. No Opinion

21. Theft is not a serious problem in our school.
    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Disagree
    D. Strongly Disagree
    E. No Opinion

22. Cheating is not a problem in our school.
    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Disagree
    D. Strongly Disagree
    E. No Opinion

23. Vandalism is not a serious problem at our school.
    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Disagree
    D. Strongly Disagree
    E. No Opinion

24. Outsiders do not pose a threat to students in our school.
    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Disagree
    D. Strongly Disagree
    E. No Opinion

25. Student absenteeism is not a problem at our school.
    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Disagree
    D. Strongly Disagree
    E. No Opinion

26. Teachers in our school do not feel physically threatened by students.
    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Disagree
    D. Strongly Disagree
    E. No Opinion

27. The total educational program offered in our school is of high quality.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

28. Our school is doing a good job of providing children with the opportunity to reach full potential.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

29. Our teachers are generally highly competent.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

30. Our teachers place the right amount of emphasis on developing critical thinking skills. (problem-solving, analyzing)
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

31. Proper emphasis is placed on marks and grades in our school.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

32. The total number and type of course offerings in our school is adequate.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

33. Class periods are long enough to suit the needs of the different courses at our school.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

34. The amount or extent of educational change or innovation in our school is about right.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

35. More imaginative learning programs are needed in our school.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

36. The student activities program is sufficient to meet the needs of children.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

37. Acceptable emphasis is placed on the social development of children.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

38. Students in our school participate in planning student activities.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

39. Student participation in school activities is an important aspect of education at our school.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

40. Services provided by our school's counseling and guidance services are supportive of my child's present needs and future aspirations.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

41. School health programs in our school (sight and hearing testing, health counseling) are adequate.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

42. My child's teachers require use of our school library for supplementary study and work.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

43. Transportation services provided by our school meet the needs of the majority of students.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

44. My child enjoys school lunches.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

45. Our school's lunch program offers a nutritional menu.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

46. Our school is well maintained.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

47. My child looks forward to going to school each day.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

48. The morale of students in our school is good.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

49. It is easy to make appointments to see teachers in our school.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

50. It is easy to make appointments with the administrators in our school.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

51. Teachers in our school are concerned about my child as an individual.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

52. My child receives the personal attention needed from the school in such matters as help in class and selecting courses.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

53. School rules and regulations affecting students in our school are reasonable.
A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Disagree
D. Strongly Disagree
E. No Opinion

PARENT OPINION INVENTORY

The purpose of this survey is to assist your school in learning more about itself by measuring the attitudes of its patrons toward the program and related matters. Your opinions are of vital importance to this assessment. There are no right or wrong answers. The answers you give will be completely confidential.

PART B

These questions provide you with an opportunity to use your own words in responding. Use the lined space provided in writing your answers to each question. If additional space is needed, you may attach another sheet.

Do not feel compelled to respond to all items unless you desire to do so.

1. What do you think our school should be trying to do? _____

2. What do you expect your child to be able to do when finished with this school? _____

3. If you could change what is being taught at our school, what would you change? _____

4. If you were asked to list the major problems existing in our school, what would they be? _____

5. This school would be better if . . . _____

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